

Michigan Waste Industries Association

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX • PHONE 517-484-6561
124 W. Allegan, Suite 1900 • Lansing MI 48933

August 10, 2011

Honorable Chuck Moss
S-351 Capitol Building
Lansing MI 48909

Dear Representative Moss:

The Michigan Waste Industries Association (MWIA) supports the recently passed Department of Environmental Quality 2011 budget with the declared commitment to identify a long-term, sustainable, and equitable funding source for the solid waste management fund providing resources for activities of the Environmental Resource Management Division. MWIA supports implementation legislation for this budget provided it limits the solid waste surcharge increase to \$.05 and includes a two year sunset provision.

Additionally, at the appropriate time in the implementation bill process, MWIA will be offering clarifying language to the statute related to who can be requested to pay the solid waste surcharge. This will be a simple, legally substantiated change of the word "may" to "shall" in section 324.11525 of Act 451 of 1994.

As the primary resource for the management of waste in our state the members of MWIA value the Department's mission to **Protect Michigan's Environment, Ensuring Michigan's Future**. Our members recognize the importance of the services made available from the solid waste surcharge. The vast majority of these funds are expected to be collected by our members at a cost to our customers. This is a concerning fact we have not overlooked. However, we find this budget proposal to be a reasonable combination of solutions—providing for immediate funding needs and developing a better plan for the future.

MWIA is a nonprofit consortium composed of Michigan-based companies who are involved in the collection, processing, recycling and disposal of solid waste. Members include neighborhood waste haulers, regional landfill operators and managers and environmental engineering firms working together to ensure that solid waste is handled in a way that is both efficient and environmentally sound.

We appreciate your consideration of our position. If you have questions or require further information please contact our legislative counsel Adrian Cazal at 517-484-8800.

Sincerely,



Tonia M. Olson
President
Michigan Waste Industries Association

cc: Members of the Michigan House

Ben Williams - Senate Bill 447 & 448

From: "Catherine Garnham" <cgarnha@cityofeastlansing.com>
To: <benwilliams@house.mi.gov>, <chuckmoss@house.mi.gov>, <JosephHaveman@hou...
Date: 8/4/2011 8:36 AM
Subject: Senate Bill 447 & 448

Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee:

I am a member of the Michigan Water Environment Association. We are 2000 of the professionals engaged in protecting Michigan's Water Environment. We represent most of the certified municipal wastewater treatment plant operators. We believe that a strong operator certification program is critical to protecting the public health and the environment.

In many communities the wastewater infrastructure is the single most expensive asset. The facilities are increasingly complex and need well qualified personnel to operate and maintain them.

If support for the Operator Certification Program will not be available from the General Fund, then we support creation of a fee program as proposed in SB 447 & 448.

Currently all 50 states have a certified operator requirement. Approximately 80% of these programs are supported by fees.

Michigan's program requires a minimum of education and experience as well as passing an examination. There are continuing education requirements as well.

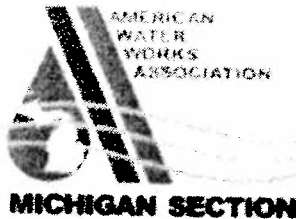
In addition to stringent environmental regulations, the facilities are governed by increasingly complex health, safety, security, and financial regulations. Communities should not be allowed to put just anyone in charge of wastewater treatment facilities. Personnel with appropriate education and experience are essential to provide the public with the services they expect and deserve.

Over the years the Michigan program has been effective and efficient in ensuring that well qualified and dedicated professional are protecting the public health and the environment. This program should continue.

Michigan's lakes and rivers are our most valuable natural resource, both for the tourism industry and for the quality of life of our residents!

Catherine Garnham
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City of East Lansing Wastewater Treatment Plant
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August 3, 2011

To: Honorable members for the House Appropriations Committee

Via e-mail to the Committee Clerk, Ben Williams, benwilliams@house.mi.gov

Subject: Michigan Water and Wastewater Treatment Operator Training and Certification Program

The Michigan Section of the American Water Works Association (MI-AWWA) and the Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA) represent the interests of the water community in Michigan, each consisting of approximately 2,000 members state-wide, encompassing most of Michigan's water utilities, from the largest to the smallest. The mission of MI-AWWA is to unite the full spectrum of the water community to protect public health and to provide safe, secure and sufficient drinking water. MWEA is dedicated to preserving, restoring, and enhancing Michigan's water resources. Together, our organizations seek to provide collective leadership to advance technology, education, science, management, and government policies throughout the water community. We represent most of the currently certified water and wastewater treatment operators.

We are writing to request your support of Michigan's water and wastewater operator training and certification programs, specifically through the certification examination and renewal fee program for revenue and funding associated with these programs as proposed in SB447 and SB448. The continued success of this program has been at risk since the 2010 loss of General Fund monies previously supporting the program, and the inclusion of a fee program to replace these funds is an important means of continuing this vital function.

Billions of dollars have been invested in our State's water infrastructure, and it is this infrastructure that supports and attracts industry and economic activity in Michigan. In addition, significant investment has been made by the State of Michigan in the training of the professionals operating and maintaining these systems. Ensuring capable, qualified professionals are in responsible charge of the increasingly complex water and wastewater systems is of the utmost importance in the continued vitality of our state. The continuation of Michigan's successful operator certification and training program provides such assurance. Our support of a fee proposal affecting many of our members is evidence of the importance we place on the continuation of this program.

In addition to support of the State's economy, Michigan's water and wastewater operator training and certification program provides many critical and tangible benefits in several areas:

Environmental Protection: The level of sophistication of our treatment, monitoring, and control systems has greatly increased over the years, due to our goals of higher quality drinking water and increased protection of our water resources. It takes highly capable professionals to ensure successful operation.

Public Health and Safety: Our water systems provide for disease control, protection of aquatic systems, protection of recreational uses of water resources, and fire protection for our communities. The human element in the operation and control of these systems is critical in assuring these benefits.

Infrastructure Protection: Ensuring qualified and capable professionals in charge of our water systems protects the significant investments made in this public infrastructure.

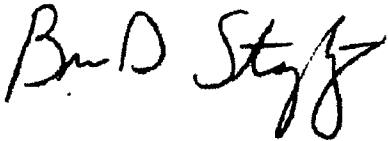
Regulatory Compliance: The regulatory controls in place for our water systems are complex, and ensuring compliance requires highly trained professionals.

Michigan's Citizens: Continued high quality service maintains public confidence in Michigan's drinking water and water resources, and operation of our water systems provides opportunity for stable employment for many of our citizens.

Again, we urge you to support this very important program through the appropriation process. If we can be of any assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. David Koch of MI-AWWA at 616.308.7165 or kochds@bv.com, or Mr. Tim Lynch of MWEA at 269.983.7719 or tlynch@qtm.net.

Very truly yours,

MICHIGAN SECTION AWWA



Brian Steglitz, Chair

MICHIGAN WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION



Kari Saganski, President

cc: Mr. Dan Wyant, Director, MDEQ